(51) International Patent Classification⁷: G06F 3/023

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/GB2004/000115

(22) International Filing Date: 9 January 2004 (09.01.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
0300798.6   11 January 2003 (11.01.2003)   GB
0321772.6   17 September 2003 (17.09.2003)   GB

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,
AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN,
CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI,
GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE,
KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD,
MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG,
PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM,
TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM,
ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH,
GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW),
Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), Euro-
pean (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR,
GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK,
TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW,
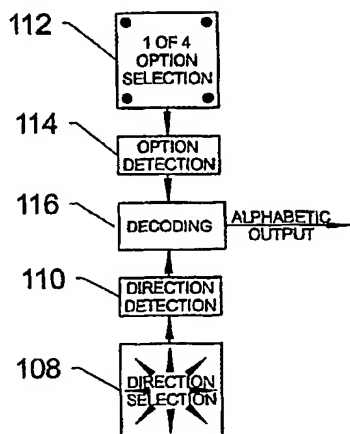ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:
— without international search report and to be republished
upon receipt of that report

(48) Date of publication of this corrected version:
9 September 2005

(15) Information about Correction:
see PCT Gazette No. 36/2005 of 9 September 2005, Sec-
tion II

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guid-
ance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the begin-
ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: DATA INPUT SYSTEM

(57) Abstract: A data input system, with which a user can input letters of an al-
phabet, comprises: a system (112,108) for enabling the user to select one of four
options and, for each selected option, to select one of eight directions; a system
(114,110) for detecting the option and direction selected by the user; and a decoder
(116) responsive to the detected option and direction and operable to interpret each
of a number of combinations of such an option and such a direction, equal to the
number of letters in the alphabet, as a respective letter of the alphabet. Direc-
tions may be selected by, for example, operating an eight-way joystick, making
directional gestures on a touch-sensitive surface, or pressing different combina-
tions of keys in a key array. Options may be selected by, for example, operating
an four-way joystick, pressing one or more shift keys and/or by providing more
than one direction selection system so that the user can select which direction se-
lection system to use for a particular letter. Compared with conventional systems,
the data input system does not require so frequent relocation of the user's finger
(or fingers or thumb(s) or a stylus or the like held by the user) when inputting
letters of an alphabet.